

FLOSS4EDU STRUCTURE AND ACTION PLAN (2008 - 2009)

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The FLOSS4Edu Initiative was launched in November, 2006 at a meeting that was held in Nairobi involving stakeholders from various Educational Institutions and Networks across several countries in Africa. The key objective of this meeting was to find out how to address the issue of shortage of high quality educational materials that can be made available to African Schools to enhance their learning experiences and to reach the majority of African population that is still illiterate.

In line with the Millenium Development Goals (MDG's) the FLOSS4Edu Initiative seeks to address access to education through eLearning supported by Educational materials that have been developed in a collaborative manner, commonly referred to as Open Educational Resources (OER's). This will have a direct effect in fostering life-long learning and addressing illiteracy levels within the African continent.

According to FLOSS4Edu, Open Educational Resources refers to Educational materials that have the following attributes:

1. That access to open content (including metadata) is provided free of charge for educational institutions, content services, and the end-users such as teachers, students and lifelong learners;
2. That the content is liberally licensed for re-use in educational activities is free from restrictions to modify, combine and repurpose; and consequently, that the content should ideally be designed for easy re-use in that open content standards and formats are being employed;

3. That for educational systems/tools software is used for which the source code is available (i.e. Open Source software) and that there are open Application Programming Interfaces (open APIs) and authorizations to re-use Web-based services as well as resources."

OER's will offer the following benefits to Educational Networks and Institutions:

- Provide a long-term conceptual framework for alliances in the creation, sharing and provision of educational resources based on a strong emphasis of reusability;
- Allow for a higher return on investment of taxpayers' money (public funds);
- Promote digital competence for the knowledge society beyond basic ICT skills ;
- Enrich the pool of resources (content and tools) for innovating curricula and teaching & learning practices;
- Lead to a leverage in the educational quality of content through quality control, feedback and improvements;
- Foster lifelong learning and social inclusion.

To teachers and other Educational practitioners, OER's will offer the following benefits:

- Offer a broader range of subjects and topics to choose from and allow for more flexibility in choosing material for teaching and learning;
- Save time and effort through reusing resources for which IPR/copyright issues have already been resolved;

- Provide a mechanism for continuous improvement
- Provide learning communities such as groups of teachers and learners with easy-to-use tools
- Promote user-centered approaches in education

With the scarcity of Educational materials available for Africa, the FLOSS4Edu Initiative was seen as a mechanism to develop Africanised Educational Materials on a platform of free will collaboration between Educational Practitioners and member institutions in Africa. This materials will meet the characteristics above and will be available to Educational Institutions and members of public as resources that can enhance the learning environment, support eLearning and its perceived benefits of scalability and flexibility, help Africa to produce its content and document its knowledge resources and turn the sorry state of being just consumers of knowledge and not creators.

In light of the above FLOSS4Edu vision was defined to be:

“Making available appropriate educational content and a set of easy to use FLOSS tools to educational institutions while building the largest community of educational practitioners collaborating on the development of Free and Open Educational Resources in Africa”

2. FLOSS4EDU CURRENT AND FUTURE STATE ANALYSIS

In pursuit of this vision, FLOSS4Edu was incubated under the WikiEducator project (www.wikieducator.org) and received much needed support from the Commonwealth of Learning (www.col.org) the proud sponsors of the WikiEducator project. Relying on support from the Commonwealth of Learning and WikiEducator, the FLOSS4Edu Initiative was able to achieve the following:

- Establishment of 4 FLOSS4Edu Regional Chapters in Africa (East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa and Francophonie)
- Capacity Building Initiatives- 10 Face to Face Capacity building Workshops and through Learning4Content initiative lookto conduct two online workshops in each commonwealth of states counties in Africa.
- Over 100 lessons developed by African Educational practioners as OERs.
- Influenced institutional change in Educational Networks to adopt the development of OERs
- Continued partnership with institutions (Universities and Educational Networks)

See the various reports in the FLOSS4Edu portal within WikiEducator (www.wikieducator.org/FLOSS4Edu)

With this progress, FLOSS4Edu has been able to influence Educational Institutions (University of Education, AMREF, Community Health Nursing-

Winneba and Kenya Educational Network (KENET) to develop their educational materials as Open Educational Resources that can be shared and re-used by other stakeholders.

With the continued interest in the FLOSS4Edu initiative, FLOSS4Edu regional coordinators met in Dakar, Senegal and outlined an action plan that will help FLOSS4Edu to scale up and to meet its objectives. It was also agreed that FLOSS4Edu should be formally constituted as a Non-Governmental Organisation that can be able to raise funds for its operations as outlined in its action item. In this meeting it was also agreed that the FLOSS4Edu project will operate based on the following four (4) pillars:

1. **Collaboration4Content:** Build a network of Educational Practitioners (Individual and Institutions) willing to participate in the development of OERs ;
2. **Access4Content:** Adoption of the Open Digital Villages concept and provide access “paid” through content development;
3. **Learning4Content:** Continue building capacity to Educational Practitioners in developing OER Content
4. **Advocacy4Content:** Promotional Activities and Advocacy

Inline with the four pillars above the FLOSS4Edu initiative developed a two (2) year action plan that will be used to steer the progress of the FLOSS4Edu Initiative.

It was also recognized that for the action plan to be implemented, FLOSS4Edu need to be registered as a non-governmental organization entity based on the organizational structure outlined below.

FLOSS4EDU ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

FLOSS4Edu shall comprise of members who can be institutions/organizations or individuals willing to participate in this initiative. Members shall be recruited within the regional chapters and membership shall be free to anyone willing to participate. Members shall be grouped based on their individual content contribution towards the pull of Educational Resources within the WikiEducator.

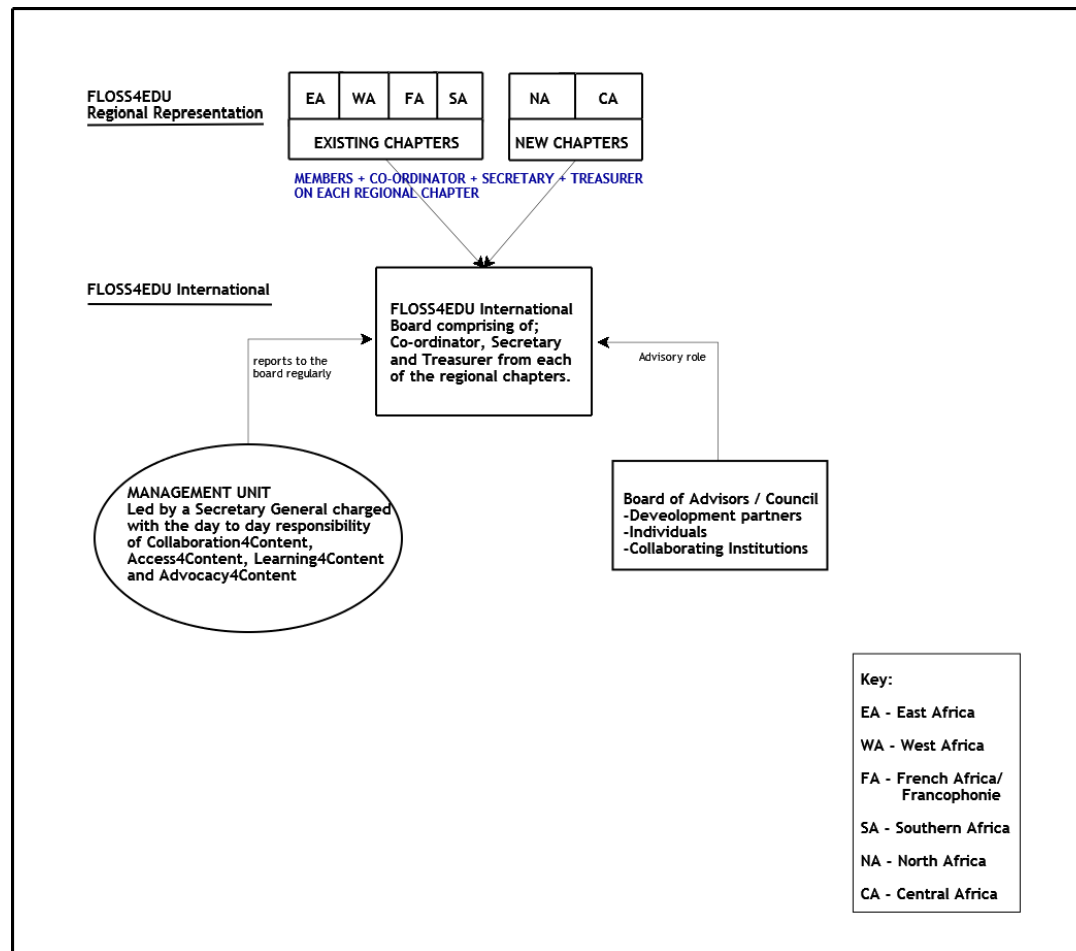
Members shall from time to time vote and elect their regional chapter leaders. This shall be done through online voting. Regional chapter leaders shall comprise of a Co-ordinator, a Secretary and a Treasurer who shall compose part of the FLOSS4Edu International Board.

The International board shall appoint a Management Unit that shall be led by a Secretary General who shall be responsible for the day to day running of the International Chapter and shall liase with the Board to implement the Board’s strategy.

The Board shall also appoint an advisory board comprising of members from development partners, individual who have shown exceptional commitment towards the development of Open Educational Resources, Educational Institutions, The Business Community and any other partners that the board may see fit.

This structure shall be documented in the form of a constitution that shall lay down the framework for the eventual organization of FLOSS4Edu. The chart below summarizes the FLOSS4Edu Organizational Structure.

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As FLOSS4Edu is still young, the co-ordinators agreed to form an interim board that shall be in office for a period of two(2) years. This interim shall compose of the following persons:

- Jibril Touzi - Co-ordinator, Francophonie Chapter
- Kafui Prebbie - Co-ordinator, West African Chapter
- Prof Henry Thairu - Co-ordinator, East African Chapter
- Kim Tucker - Co-ordinator, Southern Africa Chapter
- Wayne Mackintosh - Board Advisor
- Nicholas Kimolo - Secretary General, FLOSS4Edu International

This board shall be in office for two(2) years upon which FLOSS4Edu shall have achieved its interim action plan and would have gathered sufficient synergies and incorporated members who would then be required to vote in a conference that will be held in Nairobi, Kenya on September, 2009.

3. FLOSS4Edu SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

The Key objective of FLOSS4Edu Initiative is to build a network of Educational practitioners across the continent. With larger numbers of Educational Practitioners working on OER development, the effective cost of developing a particular educational resource will considerably reduce as it is distributed to a wider number of developers.

Most of the developers within the FLOSS4Edu project are motivated by other intrinsic reasons rather than purely on financial gain. FLOSS4Edu educational practitioners develop content to showcase their skills, to market themselves and their institutions, to reach a wider target audience and to be part of the global free culture movement. This considerably reduce the “hard cash” required to effectively run FLOSS4Edu.

In addition to the above, the FLOSS4Edu initiative raises “hard cash” funds through:

1. Advertising using google ads
2. Community participation where community experts are involved in quality assurance and commercialization of developed content for the sake of the community as summarized in the chat below
3. Institutional support: FLOSS4Edu has received institutional support from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL – www.col.org), UNESCO, University of Education, Ghana, Kenyatta University among other institutional stakeholders institutionalizing the OER content development effort by their educational practitioners.